

June 29th 2020

## **UCGIS Communications Committee Report**

This annual report uses a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) report to briefly review activities by the Communications Committee for the annual period preceding the 2020 UCGIS Symposium. As the committee changed membership in early 2020, this summary only applies to the period between January and June.

### **Membership**

- Jennifer Bernstein, University of Southern California (Chair)
- Kate Vavra-Musser, University of Southern California

### **Strengths**

- UCGIS continues to grow its audience via social media. Posts are identified and planned in advance in a shared spreadsheet. This organizational scheme has helped UCGIS committee members coordinate posts, organize regularly occurring posts, and pre-plan posts for scheduled events.
- Most notably, in the past six months (January-June 2020) the UCGIS twitter presence has grown significantly, in terms of number of profile visits, mentions, and new followers. During this six-month period, the UCGIS twitter account been mentioned 108 times, received 1056 profile visits, and grossed nearly 50,000 impressions\*. Most importantly, the UCGIS twitter account received 177 new followers between January-June 2020.
- Committee members have worked actively with other committees to promote UCGIS-sponsored projects and events (e.g., webinars) and cross-posted with the UCGIS website.
- The Committee has disseminated key geospatial information relevant to the Covid-19 outbreak.

### **Weaknesses**

- There has yet to be a formal definition of the UCGIS “brand”, outside of promoting the work of our member institutions and announcing scheduled events. While there has been recognition that this is needed, the Covid-19 outbreak has made communications partly a “just-in-time” effort based on current events.
- The main thrust of effort since January has been the twitter presence, but a clear communication mission and/or strategy is lacking. No other social media platforms are being utilized.
- There is no formal cross-posting between the website, listserv, and social media accounts. A shared Google drive spreadsheet has been set up to facilitate information sharing between communication committee members and other UCGIS administration but little/no coordination of the scheduling, language, and tone of posts.
- In the past, Committee members have recruited webinar participants. However this has not occurred since the change in leadership in January.
- As with all volunteer committees, members have multiple obligations and varying bandwidths.

### **Opportunities**

- Promote more of the work of UCGIS and its members
- Continue to provide key geospatial information relevant to the Covid-19 outbreak
- Increase coordination between the website, listserv, and social media accounts
- Expand to other social media platforms in addition to twitter
- Clarify the space UCGIS plays within other sources of GIS information, and how to capitalize on that differentiation

### **Threats**

- The public may eventually experience “media overload” with respect to twitter, webinars, etc.
- The committee is small relative to some other UCGIS committees.